O campo da Visual Music tem bibliografia escassa, apesar de já contar com livros e catálogos importantes que dão conta do universo do diálogo sem hierarquia entre som e imagem em movimento. Como critério para organização deste curso, foi adotada a ênfase nas obras propriamente ditas, e não no discurso bibliográfico. O pressupostos é que, como num curso de literatura, em que o importante é conhecer os autores e seus escritos, aqui o importante é ver os artistas e seus experimentos. Por isso, uma boa parte da aula vai ser dedicada a apresentação integral ou em fragmentos das obras que serão discutidas, procurando propor uma cronologia extensa das experiências em Visual Music e Performance Audiovisual Contemporânea (a manifestação que dá continuidade às pesquisas iniciadas na Visual Music).
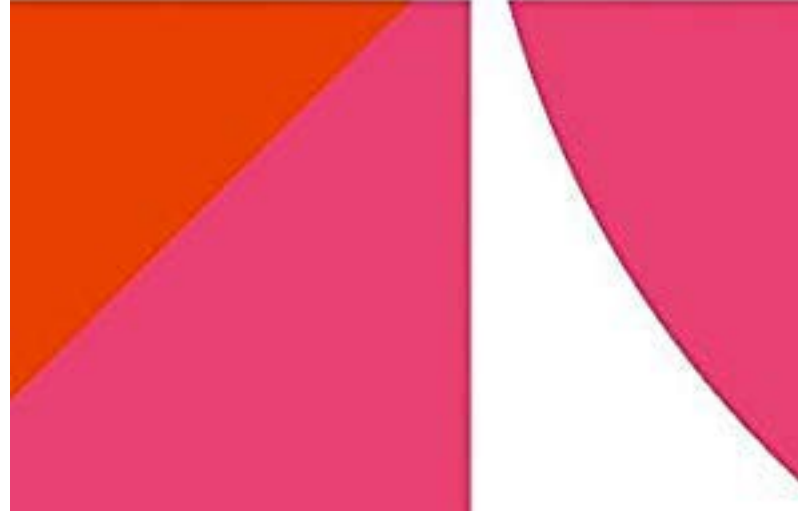
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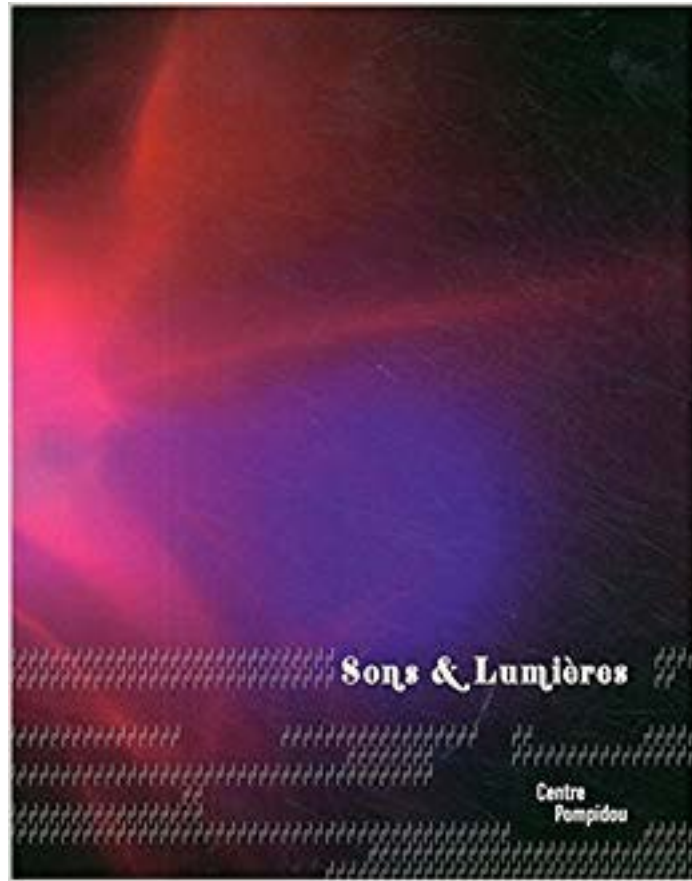
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Visual Music

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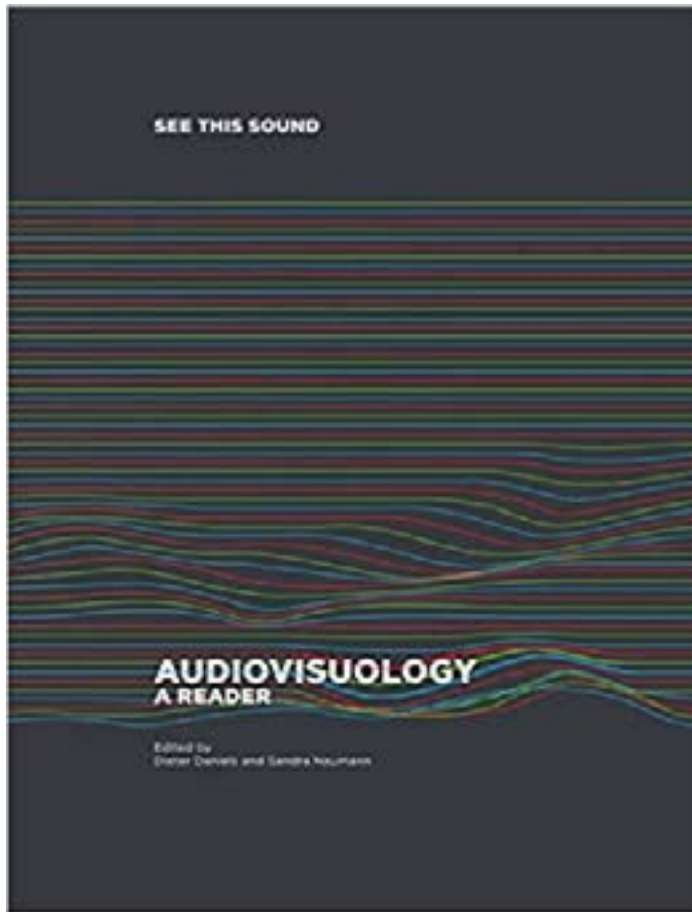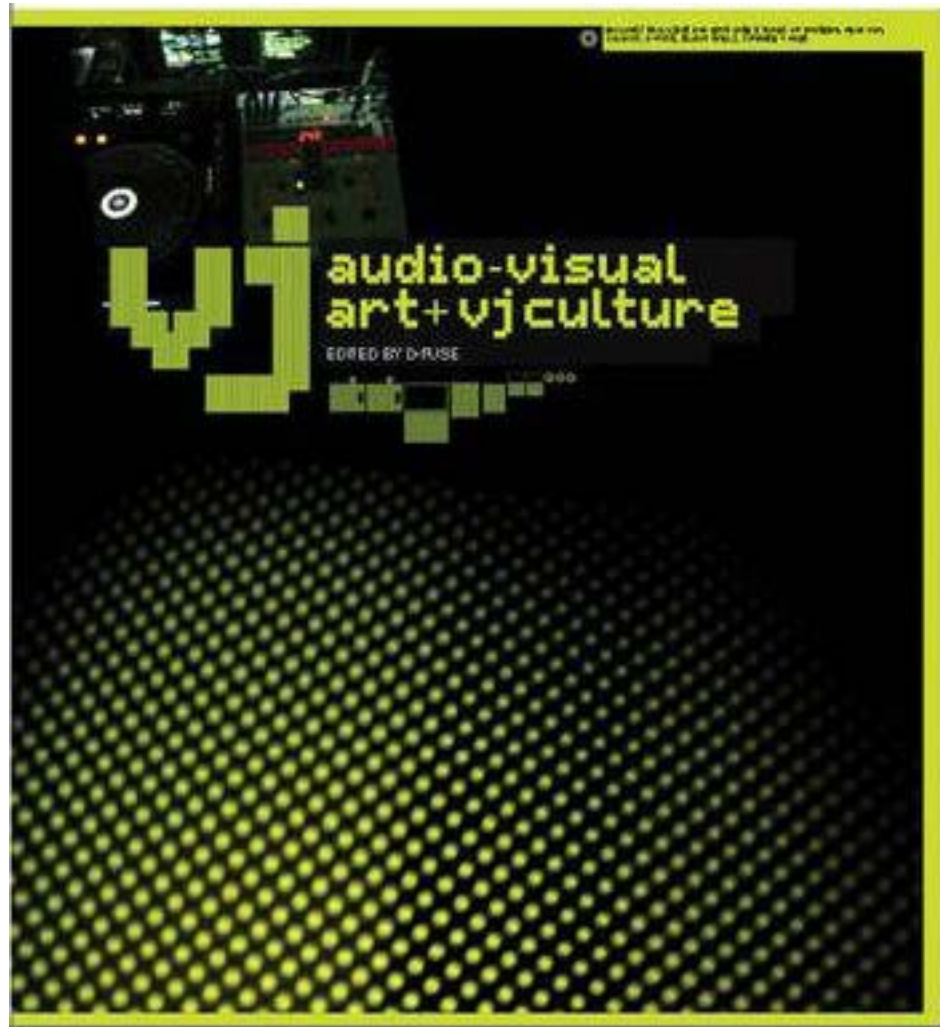
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EM BUSCA DE UMA MÚSICA VISUAL:
duas abordagens pioneiras

Sérgio Basbaum

Há mais de duas décadas, entre derivas, idas e vindas por diversos interesses de pesquisa, tenho estado engajado na investigação dos modos de relações sinestésicas entre co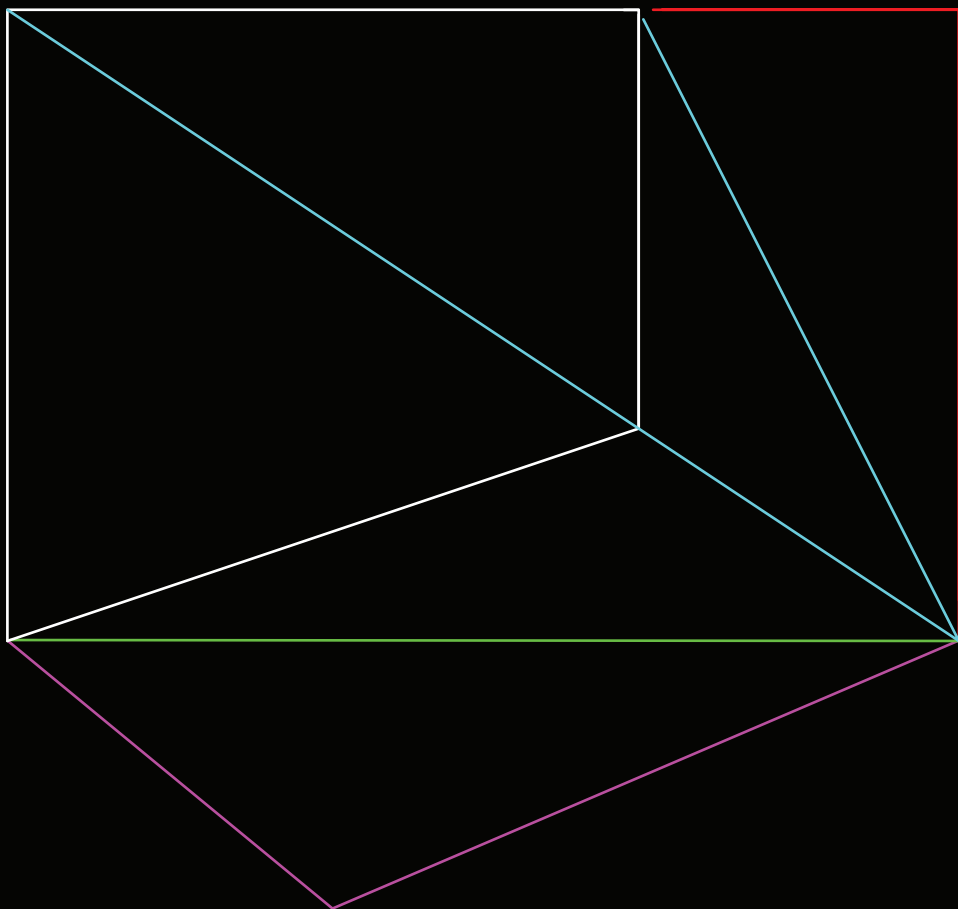res e sons. Foi essa busca que conduziu a uma pesquisa mais ampla sobre sinestesia (BASBAUM, 2002) e, em seguida, sobre as relações entre percepção, arte e tecnologia, o que tem sido o domínio que mais bem define as várias facetas de meu trabalho. Uma das questões relativas a esse território envolve o debate em torno do conceito de *visual music*, frequentemente associado às discussões sobre a sinestesia nas artes. Num texto de 1986, William Moritz propôs um recorte dos trabalhos que conceituava como *visual music*, e o fez associando essa produção à questão da espiritualidade. Esse conjunto de temas, que reúne a temporalidade da música, a plasticidade da arte abstrata – na qual vigora uma suposta autonomia da cor – e a desterritorialização proposta pela ruptura com as categorias convencionais da arte moderna (pintura, música), é recorrente em certas práticas e discursos específicos que participam do universo mais amplo da arte ao longo dos últimos séculos, e sua relação dissonante com o aspecto territorializante do pensamento disciplinar traça uma linha consistente de resistência à modernidade. Barbosa (2007) localizou muito bem a ligação entre a evocação dos sentidos no Romantismo alemão, em especial em Huysmans, e o Simbolismo francês, em que Artaud e Baudelaire escrevem abertamente sobre vogais coloridas ou multisen-

The Visual Music Film

Aimee Mollaghan

From the Pythagorean fascination with the music of the moving celestial bodies to the lively moving images of Oskar Fischinger's abstract animation, there has been an enduring fascination with the representation of music in a visual form; a music for the eye, a *visual* music. Gothic architects constructed their cathedrals according to ratios of musical consonance.[1] Painter Paul Klee employed the musical principle of polyphony to *arrange* the visual elements of his paintings. Inventors such as French Jesuit Monk, Louis Bertrand Castel and English composer Alexander Wallace Rimington (to name but three of many) have created colour and light organs to play visuals as one would play notes on a musical instrument. Choreographers such as George Balanchine have attempted to use the dancer's body within their ballets such as *Concerto Barocco* (1941) to visually express musical scores. One of the most intriguing aspects of visual music is not only the endurance of the idea in its myriad forms but also why this idea persisted for so long. The list of visual music in all of manifest permutations is wide and varied. Given this lasting fascination with visual music, it seems incongruous that there is a relative paucity of scholarship appraising the musical aspects of this lively form as a distinct entity, particularly in relation to its moving image incarnation.

Due to the concept of *visual music* encompassing so many disciplines, it would be difficult to adequately discuss them all within a single book and therefore I have chosen to discuss films that I would consider to have particularly musical qualities to them. As Immanual Kant observed, 'the aesthetics of one art is that of the other only the material is different'.[6] Film, by virtue of its innate temporality and rhythm, shares a commonality with music. Simon Shaw-Miller contends that the boundaries between arts are the result of historical or ideological conventions and 'it is useful to consider the difference between music and the visual arts as a manner of *degree*, not of *kin*'. Extending this idea to the moving image, K. J. Donnelly in *Occult Aesthetics* similarly does not contend that there are no differences between film and music, merely that due to their temporal natures, film and music, although maintaining many differences, also share many attributes. As he asserts:

> Isomorphic structures on large and small scales, and patterns of build-up, tension, and release are most evident in both, as are strong conventional concepts of 'what fits with what' and dynamic patterns of presentation, re-presentation development of material, plane so foreground and background, withholding closures and marking minor as well as final conclusions to the musical piece or film.[7]

Mindful of these shared collective attributes, I am predominantly interested in films such as those by Oskar Fischinger and Norman McLaren that enjoy a strong relationship with music and, for the most part, are attempting to represent music pictorially in some way, shape or form. This need not necessarily be predicated on an inter-sensory level or as a direct representation of music. For example, films such as those of Hans Richter, Viking Eggeling and John Whitney that appropriate the structure or form of music by drawing on musical devices such as counterpoint are also of vital importance to this investigation. The same can be said for films by, for example, Jordan Belson and James Whitney, who compose visual music films predicated on more philosophical concerns.

I have chosen to focus on one aspect of visual music film that I consider to have been under-represented in literature: the *absolute* visual music film. The terms *absolute*, *graphic* and *abstract* have all been used in relation to several of the films that I have chosen to include. Although used somewhat interchangeably, there are subtle differences in meaning between the terms. P. Adams Sitney uses the term *graphic cinema* in relation to many of the films that I am discussing as examples of visual music.[8] Like theorists such as Malcolm Turvey and Thomas Elsaesser, he views the early black-and-white films of Hans Richter and Viking Eggeling as belonging in a lineage of formal cubist and neo-plastic art.[9] Sitney's categorisation of film under the moniker *graphic film* does not necessarily mean that all of these films can necessarily be classed as *musical*. Likewise my inclusion of a number of films that Sitney has classified as *graphic* does not necessarily mean that this study focuses only on films using only geometric shapes or traditional modes of animation. Many of the filmmakers discussed in this book use unconventional creative processes and some, such as Jordan Belson, at times employ abstract images created through filmic processes rather than purely animated ones. Although all the films under discussion in this book are abstract in nature, this is also not a guarantee of their musicality. The term *absolute* is potentially the most appropriate to illustrate my hypothesis.

The term *absolute* has been applied to the abstract visual music film from its inception, reinforcing the connection of this body of work to music. In 1925 the *Novembergruppe* supported by Ufa, the German motion picture company founded in 1917, organised a film programme in Berlin entitled *Der absolute Film*. It included Viking Eggeling's film *Symphonie Diagonale*, *Lichtspiel Opus 2, 3* and *4* by Ruttmann and *Film ist Rhythm*, a work in progress by Hans Richter.[10] The programme also included 'Dreiteilige Farbesonatine', a live performance of abstract moving colour projections by Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack, in addition to *Images Mobiles* (1924) by Fernand Léger and Dudley Murphy and *Entr'acte* (1924) by René Clair.[11] Perhaps most importantly, Oskar Fischinger, arguably one of the most important figures in visual music, specifically used the term in relation to his visual music films.[12]

Filme Gráfico: filmes que exploram os elementos gráficos da imagem filmada, fazendo com que ela perca a referencialidade e enfatizando suas características composicionais e rítmicas; o filme gráfico ainda preserva elementos reconhecíveis da imagem, situando-se num campo de fronteira entre a figuração e a abstração. Há exemplos de filmes gráficos em que a imagem filmada perde completamente o registro referencial, mas mesmo nestes casos mantém-se como material a imagem filmada.

1921 FilmStudie
Hans Richter

Filme Abstrato: filme em que não há mais figuração; os elementos visuais podem ser gerados a partir da película (por exemplo, por meio de interferências diretas, riscos, rasuras) ou por meio da animação de desenhos abstratos.

1926 Anemic Cinema
Marcel Duchamp

Filme Absoluto: o termo assume dois sentidos, conforme o contexto; pode se referir a filmes feitos apenas dos materiais "essenciais" do cinema, como a luz, a sombra, sua pulsação, etc; pode se referir, ampliando um pouco o sentido, aos filmes de visual music, ou seja, filmes que exploram a relação direta entre imagem e som como recurso de montagem, eliminando a hierarquia entre os elementos da linguagem audiovisual.

1960 Arnulf Rainer
Peter Kubelka

Muitas vezes as pessoas referem-se a filmes geométricos, abstratos ou absolutos como filmes não-narrativos. Do ponto-de-vista da semiótica, a narrativa existe toda vez que existem dois signos articulados, e uma mudança de estado entre um determinado encadeamento sígnico e outro. Assim, seria possível pensar numa narrativa geométrica ou numa narrativa abstrata, que se constitui dos diferentes encadeamentos audiovisuais que elas propõe. Não se trata de uma história, com personagens e acontecimentos, mas de uma narrativa mais sutil, mais próxima à forma como a música conduz seus temas e motivos.

Mas o ato de narração remete, por outro lado, a dois outros processos que ele liga: o ato da narração é um processo de diferenciação, uma vez que escolhe e ordena os objetos e as ações, e um processo de configuração ou de integração, pelo qual integra seus objetos e suas ações e lhes dá um sentido que eles não têm por si só. Esses dois processos comandam as duas dimensões fundamentais de toda narrativa verídica (retornaremos a isso): a dimensão diferencial e seqüencial que ordena os objetos e as ações segundo suas disposições espaciais e temporais, e a dimensão configuracional e sintética, responsável pela transformação do diverso e heterogêneo em uma totalidade temporal. É também o que formula Paul Ricoeur (1980, p. 41), seguindo os passos de outros teóricos da narrativa: "pode-se chamar a narrativa de uma totalidade temporal, se se salienta o fator de configuração, ou uma sucessão ordenada, se se privilegia o fator de sucessão. É papel do ato narrativo manter juntos esses dois aspectos ou dimensões da narrativa."

André Parente, Narrativa e Modernidade

Furthermore, animation theorist William Moritz has also written an article referring to many of the visual music films that I am discussing in this book as absolute film: however. he uses the term to make a connection between the non-representational nature of these films and the abstract intangible qualities of music rather than engaging with the actual musical properties, abstract or not, of these films.[13] While I intend to draw on these ideas, I also seek to exploit the explicitly musical qualities of absolute music.

The term *visual music* also announces its inherent hybrid nature by virtue of conjoining the senses of vision and hearing within its constituent words. This intimates that it requires the characteristics of at least two disciplines, one of which must be musical in nature and one that is primarily visual in order to be classified as visual music. This hybridity and ambiguity gives rise to problems of categorisation. Many visual music texts carry alternative labels and have been classified as visual music retrospectively. This does not necessarily mean that they no longer function as exemplars of these other categories; it merely suggests that can also function in another context simultaneously. For example, *Symphonie Diagonale* by Viking Eggeling, which is considered to be a canonical visual music film, has also been considered within the context of Dada Cinema. These texts often did not fit neatly into existing categories and required a more porous one to take account of their unique hybrid qualities. Although the category of visual music was not necessarily in common usage during the creation of many of the visual music works included in this study, most of the visual music filmmakers were unequivocal in their use of music as a governing force in their work. In spite of the fact that I have made explicit the hybrid nature of the visual music text, for the purposes of this book I am treating it, at least in part, as a distinct entity, in and of itself.

Unlike some other forms of avant-garde film, on which one can consult volumes, the subject of visual music in experimental cinema has been under-represented in film history as a distinct category. As visual music draws on two distinct disciplines, film and music, it is intrinsically hybrid in nature. Its historical antecedence as a hybrid art form has therefore given rise to ambiguity surrounding it taxonomy. This is not unlike the problems of 'attribution'[15] and 'contribution'[16] that Thomas Elsaesser points out in relation to research on Dada cinema. Elsaesser asserts that the ambiguity surrounding what constitutes a Dada film is problematic, because the makers of Dada films often aligned themselves with movements other than Dada. For example, Fernand Léger was generally considered to be a Cubist painter, yet his film *Ballet Méchanique* (1924) was considered to be inherently Dadaist by Hans Richter.[17] In the same fashion, *Anémic Cinema* (1926) by Marcel Duchamp is also referred to as a Dada film in spite of Duchamp's protestations that it was not a film at all but an element of his motorised sculptures that he referred to as 'precision optics'.[18]

The visual music film shares many of the same problems of *attribution* and *contribution* suffered by Dada films. Should one resist calling *Rhythmus 21* (1921–24) by Richter a visual music film because Turvey and indeed Richter himself have made a case for it as an exemplar of Dada, or can it be appropriated as a work of visual music film by virtue of its musicality? The boundaries between different types of experimental cinema, whether they be absolute, Dadaist, poetic, structuralist or post-structuralist, are salient but not immovable. Cinematic work can diffuse across the semi-permeable membranes of classification to be consumed by another cell of the avant-garde ripe for reclassification. Perhaps an apt metaphor for what I am attempting to do with this book is provided by the concept of endocytosis, with the category of visual music functioning as a roving cell absorbing works from other disciplines by engulfing them in order to create a new, discrete form of film replete with hybrid characteristics.

The words *visual* and *music* in the title of this book alert its audience to its musical foundation from the outset. It is no surprise, therefore, that the musical analogy has served as an entry point for those who wish to discuss or understand this body of work. This analogy is not unique to the visual music film. Two dominant models can be discerned in relation to the musical analogy in the visual music film and, by extension, the arts. The first is predicated on the idea of inter-sensory correspondences, or synaesthesia, and the other is based on the idea of visual music as a hybrid art form but both have, at their roots, the idea of a *musical analogy*.

It is difficult to engage with the concept of visual music without considering the debates around the psychological phenomenon of synaesthesia. One rarely reads contemporary texts about visual music without mention of the term. Psychologists John E. Harrison and Simon Baron-Cohen state:

We, along with others (Vernon 1930; Marks 1975; Cytowic 1989, 1993; Motluk 1994), define synaesthesia as occurring when stimulation of one sensory modality automatically triggers a perception in a second modality, in the absence of any direct stimulation to this second modality.[20]

The model of visual music as a hybrid art form is the second dominant model under which the musical analogy has been exploited by the visual music film. Although I asserted that two dominant models exist in relation to the visual music film, synaesthesia and hybrid, these models are not mutually exclusive, and indeed boundaries between both categories are mutable. Central to this idea of visual music as a hybrid form is the idea of *gesamtkunstwerk* or *the total artwork*. Although widely attributed to German composer Richard Wagner, the idea of *gesamtkunstwerk* was not actually his. In fact, the initial concept of *gesamtkunstwerk* had little to do with musical theatre. *Gesamtkunstwerk* in its initial formulation was one of total unified artwork, a complete synthesis of art. Under Wagner's dispersal of the idea, specifically in relation to the music-drama of opera, it came to symbolise a mutual interaction between art forms. The arts were *combined* rather than fused to enhance the power of the overarching work.

Jerrold Levinson, like Shaw-Miller, also contends that hybrid status is primarily a historical construct. It is not enough to merely append two or more media together to form a hybrid. He instead asserts, 'In short. *hybrid art forms are art forms arising from the actual combination or interpenetration of earlier art forms.*'[26] If works are therefore to be understood as true hybrids, they must 'be understood in terms of and in light of their components'.[27] He advocates that these works be subject to a historically informed analysis rather than one grounded in individual material, which is broadly the approach that this book takes in its consideration of the visual music film. As he posits,

In synthesis or fusion the objects or products of two (or more) arts are brought together in such a way that the individual components to some extent lose their original identities and are present in the hybrid in a form significantly different from that assumed in the pure state.[28]

Not all theorists are positive about an audiovisual culture that attempts to fuse or marry imagery to music. Drawing on composer Pierre Schaeffer's controversial argument from the late 1940s intimating that records and radio can subvert the dominance of vision by allowing us to experience sound as an ontological and aesthetic entity in its own right, Christoph Cox notes that in recent times a new culture has materialised that re-evaluates 'the senses and their traditional hierarchy',[29] particularly the dominant privileging of the visual over the auditory. While it is this new culture that has presumably led to the reassessment of the visual music film as a distinct body of work, Cox argues that by combining the visual and aural, artists/musicians/filmmakers are offering 'an aesthetic appropriation [of] synaesthesia'[30] that diminishes the value of sound as an independent entity. He perceives this as a strategy for retaining sound's dependence on vision, an artistic choice that he finds detrimental to the pursuit of a true art of sound. Despite the fact that this book does not focus on the investigation of an independent sound art per se and Cox is expressly referring to a contemporary culture, his argument still holds true for the evaluation of the early visual music films emerging in a period so bound up in ideas of medium specificity by modern artists such as Piet Mondrian and art critics such as Clement Greenberg. Cox's discussion of the dominance of the visual in synaesthetic art is, therefore, a useful starting point when attempting to discuss visual music as hybrid audiovisual form.

VISUAL MUSIC

Cornelia Lund

23

Within the family of terms discussed in this publi-
cation, visual music is the oldest cousin. As such,
the term assumes two different functions: on
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Within the family of terms discussed in this publication, visual music is the oldest cousin. As such, the term assumes two different functions: on the one hand, it is referred to as an ancestor that has engendered other, more recent audiovisual expressions, while, on the other hand, visual music is very much alive as a contemporary audiovisual expression in its own right. In this double function of being an antecedent of the music clip, of live cinema, or VJing, for example, and of still being a player in the same field of contemporary audio- visual production, the term has acquired an ex- tremely broad meaning, to the point of becoming potentially meaningless.

When we think of visual music, we probably have in mind a certain idea of what it looks like. "Mostly abstract and non-narrative visuals combined with sound, presented either as film or as a live or realtime performance involving projection," could be a minimal definition based on experience. One look at the Internet, however, is enough to show that the situation is more complex. Visual music seems to serve as an umbrella term for all kinds of audiovisual production—the umbrella having become a very large one since the advent of realtime technology, sheltering everything from live cinema, through music video and installations, to interactive applications. Therefore, if we don't wish to dismiss the notion of visual music because it has become unmanageable, a thorough examination of the field of contemporary visual music is imperative in order to reestablish a more stable and viable definition. A set of main questions will

structure our analysis, in an attempt to frame the field from different angles: How does contemporary visual music relate to historical forms and preoccupations of visual music? Where is it being made and discussed? Who are the producers and theoreticians of visual music? In which contexts does it appear? And finally: How does it relate to the other players in the field of contemporary audiovisual production?

Born some hundred years ago, the term "visual music" is deeply rooted in the artistic exploration of synaesthesia of the time. Its historical ancestry is traditionally located in Pythagoras' reflections on music and color being both organized in intervals. Some centuries later those reflections on the physical nature of sound and color gradually led to the discovery of sound and light waves. From color organs and experiments with oscilloscope techniques to digital programming, the idea of a direct analogy between these waveforms, a mathematical system that would link them rationally, as well as ways of converting sound to image and vice versa, have been at the core of visual music experiments. Consequently, visual music artists have always seized on the latest developments in media technology or even created new instruments customized to their needs.

Such enthusiasm for technological solutions is so characteristic of a certain kind of visual music that in 1986 William Moritz even warned against "the delusion of technology." Thus, it is very typical that VJs include visual music when they outline their own genealogy. Whereas some of the historical heritage to visual music—such as a compositional approach that stresses the struc- tural relationship between visuals and sounds— is hardly contested, the common attitude toward synaesthesia is ambivalent, to say the least. Yet its place in the discourse and production of contemporary visual music is affirmed by titles of events such as "Música Visual: El Nuevo Arte Sinestético" (Caracas, 2009). Even the most polemical attitude, which declares visual music dead "because synaesthetic art has come to a dead-end," assumes that visual music is based on synaesthesia, but adds a negative twist by defining the "hallucinatory fusion of the senses" as a mere "marketing ploy," as dangerous as "the myths of interactivity and other immersive/absorbing/homogenizing environments." Without actively dismissing visual music, Hervé Vanel's argumentation points in a similar direction by affirming that a certain enthusiastic discourse about the digital possibilities of intertwining music and images "belongs to a philosophy that is deeply rooted in the utopian dream of visual music." A modernist utopia, closely linked to the wish for a "'better society' that has never ceased to be beckoned through the diverse aspirations for a synthesis of the arts," which still shines through in—rather

more esoteric— formulations, such as the "holistic multi-sensual and expressive aesthetic," that the Frankfurt- based Visual Music Award expects from the entries to the competition.

As modernist utopias, however, are generally considered to have failed, their key concepts tend to lose impact, and so synaesthesia has disappeared from a large part of the contemporary discourse on visual music. Or it is at least discussed with some skepticism. Keefer and Ox acknowledge that synaesthesia is still part of the field of visual music, but "certainly not the prominent or most significant definition." Their proposed solution is the concept of "metaphoric" synaesthesia.

But, if synaesthesia is not the central element of visual music any more, how can the term be defined today? For Fox-Gieg, Keefer, and Schedel, in their "Editorial" to one of the more recent publications on visual music, "perhaps the most useful [definition] refers to visuals composed as if they were music, using musical structures. Another definition refers to a visualization of music, using the structures of an underlying composition in a new work. Still more examples of visual music include works using manual, mechanical, or algorithmic means of transcoding sound to image, pieces which translate images into sound, abstract silent films, and even performance painting and live cinema." The idea of a structural analogy based on the model of

musical composition is stressed in many definitions coming from a background of music and musi- cology. According to the musicologist Maura McDonnell, visual music productions can put an emphasis either on the "craft of composition" or on the "performance aspect." Whether the performance is based on analog instruments or realtime controllers, it should still obey the rules that structure music. 19 [These considerations consequently lead McDonnell to define visual music as "an area of activity that comes under the broad area of sonic arts." This might come as a surprise for those who have always been looking at visual music from the perspective of the visual arts or film, with Kandinsky's paintings or the films of Oskar Fischinger, Len Lye, and Mary Ellen Bute as historical references in mind. Many attempts to define visual music—whether they tend to stress the compositional or transpositional aspect or favor other forms of sound-image relations—privilege neither of its ingredients and see it as something new that emerges from the combination of image and sound. The authors may differ as to what this third entity is to be called, a "medium" or an "art form," for example, but they generally agree that the objective of visual music productions is an interaction, or even an "evenly balanced or equilibrated interplay between visual and acoustic components," leading to an effect that neither of the two components would have produced alone. This idea of sound and image coming together to form a new audiovisual entity clearly reflects Dick Higgins' concept of "intermedia" as the merging of two art forms, or media, to form a new one, the "intermedium."

Seen historically, this proximity to the concept of "intermedia" points us to the 1960s, when visual music enjoyed its second strong wave. While the idea of synaesthesia, strongly associated with the early experiments in visual music in the first decades of the 20th century, had not become completely obsolete, visual music was now part of the larger context of "expanded arts." The third wave of visual music, which is linked to the advent of realtime technologies, has embraced these historical concepts and adjusted them to the contemporary field. Due to the dual nature of visual music, the protagonists of the discipline, theoreticians and producers, have always come from different backgrounds, mostly music and the visual arts, experimental film, and, in more recent digital times, from architecture, media, or even game design. Although few of the participants in our online survey have declared themselves to be visual music artists (see p. 71), the international community is very active, gathering in the "Visual Music Village" or around the "Center for Visual Music" and the "Visual Music Archive," and meeting at festivals and conferences dedicated to visual music. Geographically, this community spreads around the world, with strong centers in the English-speaking countries, especially the US and Canada, in Europe, especially in Germany, and with growing activities in South America. These geographical centers do not come as a surprise, as visual music, born in the context of the historical avant-gardes, was initially based on the principles of Western art music.

When we look at the parameters discussed above, it appears quite unexpected that a rather clearly defined concept like visual music should suddenly start sprawling all over the field of artistic audio- visual production. Why is the concept used so inflationarily, and what is it that makes it so attractive? On the one hand, by declaring a piece to be "visual music," its producers inscribe it into an acknowledged avant-garde tradition in music and/or the visual arts with a lineage of well- known artistic examples, on the other hand, the label "visual music" implicitly maintains that sound and image come together in a meaningful way. Hence, filing an audiovisual piece or a festival, for example, under "visual music" might help to suggest a certain relevance, just by affilia- tion. ^ This is not to say, of course, that visual music has become an empty label. Following the definitions discussed above, the central point of visual music is, indeed, the quality of the audio- visual combination, which can be achieved by different means, such as a structural reference to musical composition, by transcoding sound into image or vice versa, or by performing sound and image according to the rules of (musical) improvisation. The result of this audiovisual combination should be a new, genuinely audiovisual product. "Medium" and "intermedium" are some of the terms that have already been cited as possible labels for this product. Following the idea of "inter- medium," which is, however, firmly based in the discursive context of the 1960s, it seems tempt- ing to take up a concept which addresses more directly the relations of media under the sign of the digital: the "metamedium," as the result of an "active" mix of media, as opposed to

multimedia seen as a mere addition of media. While the concept of the metamedium describes how media work together, it doesn't address specific aspects of audiovisual combination in visual music. So may- be another concept is needed, one that is based on the description of characteristics, such as the concept of genre. The short definition we have just developed—complemented by descriptive terms like "mostly abstract" and "non-narrative"—could serve as the basis for a genre definition. The only problem is that beyond this minimal definition, everything is very flexible about visual music. 29 [Unorthodox combinations of media have always been characteristic of it and have become even more so now with the post-digital mixes of media— a usage of media constituting a challenge in terms of genre definition, even for a transmedial perspective on genres. Moreover, the concept of visual music doesn't point to a certain form of presentation, a context, or a technical support— all parameters that the other concepts discussed in this book address. In return, however, these concepts all can be visual music, even if only partly, when the combination of audio and video is organized accordingly.

The Visual Music Film

Aimee Mollaghan

From the Pythagorean fascination with the music of the moving celestial bodies to the lively moving images of Oskar Fischinger's abstract animation, there has been an enduring fascination with the representation of music in a visual form; a music for the eye, a *visual* music. Gothic architects constructed their cathedrals according to ratios of musical consonance.[1] Painter Paul Klee employed the musical principle of polyphony to *arrange* the visual elements of his paintings. Inventors such as French Jesuit Monk, Louis Bertrand Castel and English composer Alexander Wallace Rimington (to name but three of many) have created colour and light organs to play visuals as one would play notes on a musical instrument. Choreographers such as George Balanchine have attempted to use the dancer's body within their ballets such as *Concerto Barocco* (1941) to visually express musical scores. One of the most intriguing aspects of visual music is not only the endurance of the idea in its myriad forms but also why this idea persisted for so long. The list of visual music in all of manifest permutations is wide and varied. Given this lasting fascination with visual music, it seems incongruous that there is a relative paucity of scholarship appraising the musical aspects of this lively form as a distinct entity, particularly in relation to its moving image incarnation.

The term *visual music* also announces its inherent hybrid nature by virtue of conjoining the senses of vision and hearing within its constituent words. This intimates that it requires the characteristics of at least two disciplines, one of which must be musical in nature and one that is primarily visual in order to be classified as visual music. This hybridity and ambiguity gives rise to problems of categorisation. Many visual music texts carry alternative labels and have been classified as visual music retrospectively. This does not necessarily mean that they no longer function as exemplars of these other categories; it merely suggests that can also function in another context simultaneously. For example, *Symphonie Diagonale* by Viking Eggeling, which is considered to be a canonical visual music film, has also been considered within the context of Dada Cinema. These texts often did not fit neatly into existing categories and required a more porous one to take account of their unique hybrid qualities. Although the category of visual music was not necessarily in common usage during the creation of many of the visual music works included in this study, most of the visual music filmmakers were unequivocal in their use of music as a governing force in their work. In spite of the fact that I have made explicit the hybrid nature of the visual music text, for the purposes of this book I am treating it, at least in part, as a distinct entity, in and of itself.

The visual music film shares many of the same problems of *attribution* and *contribution* suffered by Dada films. Should one resist calling *Rhythmus 21* (1921–24) by Richter a visual music film because Turvey and indeed Richter himself have made a case for it as an exemplar of Dada, or can it be appropriated as a work of visual music film by virtue of its musicality? The boundaries between different types of experimental cinema, whether they be absolute, Dadaist, poetic, structuralist or post-structuralist, are salient but not immovable. Cinematic work can diffuse across the semi-permeable membranes of classification to be consumed by another cell of the avant-garde ripe for reclassification. Perhaps an apt metaphor for what I am attempting to do with this book is provided by the concept of endocytosis, with the category of visual music functioning as a roving cell absorbing works from other disciplines by engulfing them in order to create a new, discrete form of film replete with hybrid characteristics.

The words *visual* and *music* in the title of this book alert its audience to its musical foundation from the outset. It is no surprise, therefore, that the musical analogy has served as an entry point for those who wish to discuss or understand this body of work. This analogy is not unique to the visual music film. Two dominant models can be discerned in relation to the musical analogy in the visual music film and, by extension, the arts. The first is predicated on the idea of inter-sensory correspondences, or synaesthesia, and the other is based on the idea of visual music as a hybrid art form but both have, at their roots, the idea of a *musical analogy*.

Stephen Malinowski
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LlvUepMa31o

He is best known for his musical animations and his computer program, the Music Animation Machine, which produces animated graphical scores.[2][3] He visualizes music using a system of colored shapes, taking information from a MIDI file.[4] He has collaborated with artists such as Vincent Lo, Alexander Peskanov, Björk, and the Del Sol Quartet.[5]

The model of visual music as a hybrid art form is the second dominant model under which the musical analogy has been exploited by the visual music film. Although I asserted that two dominant models exist in relation to the visual music film, synaesthesia and hybrid, these models are not mutually exclusive, and indeed boundaries between both categories are mutable. Central to this idea of visual music as a hybrid form is the idea of *gesamtkunstwerk* or *the total artwork*. Although widely attributed to German composer Richard Wagner, the idea of *gesamtkunstwerk* was not actually his. In fact, the initial concept of *gesamtkunstwerk* had little to do with musical theatre. *Gesamtkunstwerk* in its initial formulation was one of total unified artwork, a complete synthesis of art. Under Wagner's dispersal of the idea, specifically in relation to the music-drama of opera, it came to symbolise a mutual interaction between art forms. The arts were *combined* rather than fused to enhance the power of the overarching work.

In synthesis or fusion the objects or products of two (or more) arts are brought together in such a way that the individual components to some extent lose their original identities and are present in the hybrid in a form significantly different from that assumed in the pure state.[28]

It is difficult to engage with the concept of visual music without considering the debates around the psychological phenomenon of synaesthesia. One rarely reads contemporary texts about visual music without mention of the term. Psychologists John E. Harrison and Simon Baron-Cohen state:

We, along with others (Vernon 1930; Marks 1975; Cytowic 1989, 1993; Motluk 1994), define synaesthesia as occurring when stimulation of one sensory modality automatically triggers a perception in a second modality, in the absence of any direct stimulation to this second modality.[20]

Muitas vezes as pessoas referem-se a filmes geométricos, abstratos ou absolutos como filmes não-narrativos. Do ponto-de-vista da semiótica, a narrativa existe toda vez que existem dois signos articulados, e uma mudança de estado entre um determinado encadeamento sígnico e outro. Assim, seria possível pensar numa narrativa geométrica ou numa narrativa abstrata, que se constitui dos diferentes encadeamentos audiovisuais que elas propõe. Não se trata de uma história, com personagens e acontecimentos, mas de uma narrativa mais sutil, mais próxima à forma como a música conduz seus temas e motivos.

Mas o ato de narração remete, por outro lado, a dois outros processos que ele liga: o ato da narração é um processo de diferenciação, uma vez que escolhe e ordena os objetos e as ações, e um processo de configuração ou de integração, pelo qual integra seus objetos e suas ações e lhes dá um sentido que eles não têm por si só. Esses dois processos comandam as duas dimensões fundamentais de toda narrativa verídica (retornaremos a isso): a dimensão diferencial e seqüencial que ordena os objetos e as ações segundo suas disposições espaciais e temporais, e a dimensão configuracional e sintética, responsável pela transformação do diverso e heterogêneo em uma totalidade temporal. É também o que formula Paul Ricoeur (1980, p. 41), seguindo os passos de outros teóricos da narrativa: "pode-se chamar a narrativa de uma totalidade temporal, se se salienta o fator de configuração, ou uma sucessão ordenada, se se privilegia o fator de sucessão. É papel do ato narrativo manter juntos esses dois aspectos ou dimensões da narrativa."

André Parente, Narrativa e Modernidade

Mary Ellen Bute (November 21, 1906 – October 17, 1983) was a pioneer American film animator, producer, and director. She is significant as one of the first female experimental filmmakers, and was the creator of the first electronically generated film images[1]. Her specialty was visual music; while working in New York City between 1934 and 1953, Bute made fourteen short abstract musical films. Many of these were seen in regular movie theaters, such as Radio City Music Hall, usually preceding a prestigious film. Several of her abstract films were categorized as part of her *Seeing Sound* series.

Tarantella (1940) - Mary Ellen Bute
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=czDsy8BYP1M

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PAPER

Visual Trends in Contemporary Visual Music Practice

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The first concepts of Visual Music date back to the 1920s and they usually included silent or sound films that showed certain movements of graphics of pure forms and shapes visually. Although, these early graphics and their motions may have resembled geometrically recognisable shapes and patterns, they were meant to show abstract visualisations. The earlier Visual Music practitioners challenged themselves to create these works that would have as little representation of the physical world as possible, therefore incorporating abstraction as the main visual trend of Visual Music. Today, the traditional Visual Music is, for this reason, automatically associated with an artist's abstract representation of sound.

This study looks at and attempts to see whether there is a new trend in this area that could distinguish contemporary Visual Music from the traditional abstract Visual Music. The study examines whether there has been a shift from abstraction to representation after almost a hundred years of Visual Music. Fifty works were collected and analysed from the Sound Image colloquiums of 2016 and 2017, (University of Greenwich, 2017) in order to categorise contemporary Visual Music into groups according to: a) sound-image relationship; b) abstract-representational aesthetics, and c) presence or absence of the third dimension.

Absolute Abstraction in the Visual Music tradition

Visual Music was born in Modernism; consequently it carried a lot of ideas and aesthetics from Modern Art. Modernistic features of early Visual Music showed significant elements of abstraction, creating *art for art's sake* and an avoidance to imitate the physical world. Continuing the theme of Modernism, artists attempted to produce works that had no reference whatsoever to physical reality, much like the trends of Abstract Expressionism and Formalism in painting.

In modernism, the artist has full control of the concept and outcome, whereas the work itself becomes aesthetically and philosophically self-conscious, self-critical and self-referential. This can be seen in Greenberg's 'Modern Painting' (1960), where he labels Kant 'the first real modernist' because he was the philosopher who initiated the self-criticism tendency in the nineteenth century; a tendency that generated modernist thinking. Moreover, modernism was a reaction to the long tradition of realism and bourgeois predilections of that century (Barth, 1984; Graff, 1973). In previous art movements, such as classical, religious, renaissance and romanticism, the painting was the medium to represent historical events, religious scenes or people.

Music in contrast to visual arts (painting or sculpture) was autonomous and self-defined without the necessity to represent something from the physical world. Instead, music was defined by its own elements, such as rhythm, tempo, and melody, and it also had the ability to evoke emotions without the need to use images or a narrative. Abstract painters tried to follow this route of musical autonomy by creating paintings that did not express any concepts or narratives. The protagonists are no longer kings or landscapes but the painting itself: the rhythm of succeeding colour along with the abstract shapes as well as the texture of the materials. For Greenberg, this was the epitome of modern art as it represents and expresses nothing else but itself (Maker, 2000). Another modernistic trend of traditional Visual Music is the naming of the works with titles that simply describe the visual (or sometimes the sound). In this way the works are independent of any narrative,[1] have deeper meanings[2] and may avoid any reference to the physical world.[3] Works such as these include: 'Squares' (1934), 'Composition in Blue' (1935) by Oscar Fischinger, 'Dots' (1940), 'Loops' (1940), 'Stars and Stripes' (1940), 'Lines: Vertical' (1960) and 'Lines: Horizontal' (1962) by McLaren, to name a few.[4]

Early Visual Music works were produced by drawings or scratches directly onto film. The aim of the artist was to imitate the rhythmical elements of music with the pace the graphics, colours and lights appear, move and disappear (Mollaghan, 2015). For this reason, the artists, while making their visuals, were

listening to a specific music or sound at the same time. When Visual Music was presented to audience, on occasion it was played with music and sometimes it was screened silently. A good example of one of the earliest works created on this subject is 'Diagonal Symphony' by Viking Eggeling (1924). In this abstract animation, there are white geometrical objects appearing and disappearing on the screen. With little movement of the objects, the real focus was placed on how these simple objects transform from one to another. This silent film and the movement of different shapes designed in Art Deco fashion did not represent anything concrete. As the shapes moved, there was no real representation of reality and the whole work seemed abstract. 'Diagonal Symphony' and other similar early Visual Music works are removed from physical reality for the following characteristics[5]:

a) The films were silent.

In the era of silent film, the idea of not recreating the physical world seems to be one of the main challenges artists faced. For Rudolf Arnheim, cinema was something closer to pictorial art that needed no added elements of sound, as he believed this would disrupt the outcome of the film, because synchronised sound added no real value to the actual film (Arnheim, 1957). Arnheim believed that film transformed the world that was previously photographed, but the world being filmed was still stylised and not representative. In Film as Art (ibid) Arnheim makes an analogy between 'Sound Film vs Silent Film' and 'Wax museum ideals vs creative art', meaning that sound films are not creative artworks but like the wax museum statues, are a representation of something else.[6]

b) The imagery was abstract

With the growth of different arts, such as sculpture and theatre, Clement Greenberg believed that abstract imagery is the best way to keep politics and influences, therefore representation, away from art. His beliefs suggested that although the art of painting was restricted by a certain size and type of

blank canvases, it was still 'free' of the imitations of reality that were present in film, theatre or sculpture (Greenberg, 1993). He also believed that in arts the major quality gravitates more and more from representation to abstraction (Greenberg, 1961: 135).

c) There was no attempt to imitate the third dimension.

As aforementioned, Visual Music was always two dimensional abstract art that focused on staying away from concepts of reality and representation of physical elements. Although, abstract was still the way forward, there were artists who could not resist the influence of physical reality. One of them was Normal McLaren with his short film, 'Dots' (1940). McLaren placed appearing and disappearing dots on a red background accompanied by sound. The viewer could hear a certain sound every time a dot was placed on the red canvas (McLaren, 1940). This sound changed depending on the shape and size of the dot. The optical illusion of dots getting larger and larger made it seem like proximity of the viewer was getting closer and closer, therefore the increasing and decreasing size of dots was an attempt to imitate the human reality of perspective.

Oskar Fischinger created another example of the usage of early motion graphics to create a representation of sound visually through his short film, 'An Optical Poem' (1938). This two dimensional piece showed motions of objects change their position and size depending on the changes in sound and rhythm (Fischinger, 1938). Although, the objects were representing what Fischinger though the sound could look like, the objects themselves were still two dimensional and very reflective of the artist's thought rather than reflecting a deeper meaning that would be known to all viewers. A similar but slightly more advanced concept was created by Mary Ellen Bute (Bute, 1936), as the viewers could see the use of a hybrid visual aesthetic of representation and abstraction. These representational images carry elements of experienced reality, such as lights and shadows, third dimension and textures, but unlike Fischinger's work, these images are composed in such a way that they are not recognisable objects.

At a time when much of animation was consumed with little anthropomorphized animals sporting white gloves, Oskar Fischinger went in a completely different direction. His work is all about dancing geometric shapes and abstract forms spinning around a flat featureless background. Think of a Mondrian or Malevich painting that moves, often in time to the music. Fischinger's movies have a mesmerizing elegance to them. Check out his 1938 short *An Optical Poem* above. Circles pop, sway and dart across the screen, all in time to Franz Liszt's *2nd Hungarian Rhapsody*. This is, of course, well before the days of digital. While it might be relatively simple to manipulate a shape in a computer, Fischinger's technique was decidedly more low tech. Using bits of paper and fishing line, he individually photographed each frame, somehow doing it all in sync with Liszt's composition. Think of the hours of mind-numbing work that must have entailed.

Born in 1900 near Frankfurt, Fischinger trained as a musician and an architect before discovering film. In the 1930s, he moved to Berlin and started producing more and more abstract animations that ran before feature films. They proved to be popular too, at least until the National Socialists came to power. The Nazis were some of the most fanatical art critics of the 20th Century, and they hated anything non representational. The likes of Paul Klee, Oskar Kokoschka and Wassily Kandinsky among others were written off as "degenerate." (By stark contrast, the CIA reportedly loved Abstract Expressionism, but that's a different story.) Fischinger fled Germany in 1936 for the sun and glamour of Hollywood.

An Optical Poem (1938) - Oscar Fischinger
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Xc4g00FFLk&feature=emb_logo

The problem was that Hollywood was really not ready for Fischinger. Producers saw the obvious talent in his work, and they feared that it was too ahead of its time for broad audiences. "[Fischinger] was going in a completely different direction than any other animator at the time," said famed graphic designer Chip Kidd in an interview with NPR. "He was really exploring abstract patterns, but with a purpose to them — pioneering what technically is the music video."

Fischinger's most widely seen American work was the section in Walt Disney's *Fantasia* set to Bach's *Toccata and Fugue in D Minor*. Disney turned his geometric forms into mountain peaks and violin bows. Fischinger was apoplectic. "The film is not really my work," Fischinger later reflected. "Rather, it is the most inartistic product of a factory. ...One thing I definitely found out: that no true work of art can be made with that procedure used in the Disney studio." Fischinger didn't work with Disney again and instead retreated into the art world.

Trecho Abstrato de Fantasia, da Disney
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zt9iy5THnbk&feature=emb_logo

VISUAL MUSIC

Cornelia Lund

23

Within the family of terms discussed in this publi-
cation, visual music is the oldest cousin. As such,
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Within the family of terms discussed in this publication, visual music is the oldest cousin. As such, the term assumes two different functions: on the one hand, it is referred to as an ancestor that has engendered other, more recent audiovisual expressions, while, on the other hand, visual music is very much alive as a contemporary audiovisual expression in its own right. In this double function of being an antecedent of the music clip, of live cinema, or VJing, for example, and of still being a player in the same field of contemporary audio- visual production, the term has acquired an ex- tremely broad meaning, to the point of becoming potentially meaningless.

When we think of visual music, we probably have in mind a certain idea of what it looks like. "Mostly abstract and non-narrative visuals combined with sound, presented either as film or as a live or realtime performance involving projection," could be a minimal definition based on experience. One look at the Internet, however, is enough to show that the situation is more complex. Visual music seems to serve as an umbrella term for all kinds of audiovisual production—the umbrella having become a very large one since the advent of realtime technology, sheltering everything from live cinema, through music video and installations, to interactive applications. Therefore, if we don't wish to dismiss the notion of visual music because it has become unmanageable, a thorough examination of the field of contemporary visual music is imperative in order to reestablish a more stable and viable definition. A set of main questions will

structure our analysis, in an attempt to frame the field from different angles: How does contemporary visual music relate to historical forms and preoccupations of visual music? Where is it being made and discussed? Who are the producers and theoreticians of visual music? In which contexts does it appear? And finally: How does it relate to the other players in the field of contemporary audiovisual production?

Born some hundred years ago, the term "visual music" is deeply rooted in the artistic exploration of synaesthesia of the time. Its historical ancestry is traditionally located in Pythagoras' reflections on music and color being both organized in intervals. Some centuries later those reflections on the physical nature of sound and color gradually led to the discovery of sound and light waves. From color organs and experiments with oscilloscope techniques to digital programming, the idea of a direct analogy between these waveforms, a mathematical system that would link them rationally, as well as ways of converting sound to image and vice versa, have been at the core of visual music experiments. Consequently, visual music artists have always seized on the latest developments in media technology or even created new instruments customized to their needs.

Such enthusiasm for technological solutions is so characteristic of a certain kind of visual music that in 1986 William Moritz even warned against "the delusion of technology." Thus, it is very typical that VJs include visual music when they outline their own genealogy. Whereas some of the historical heritage to visual music—such as a compositional approach that stresses the struc- tural relationship between visuals and sounds— is hardly contested, the common attitude toward synaesthesia is ambivalent, to say the least. Yet its place in the discourse and production of contemporary visual music is affirmed by titles of events such as "Música Visual: El Nuevo Arte Sinestético" (Caracas, 2009). Even the most polemical attitude, which declares visual music dead "because synaesthetic art has come to a dead-end," assumes that visual music is based on synaesthesia, but adds a negative twist by defining the "hallucinatory fusion of the senses" as a mere "marketing ploy," as dangerous as "the myths of interactivity and other immersive/absorbing/homogenizing environments." Without actively dismissing visual music, Hervé Vanel's argumentation points in a similar direction by affirming that a certain enthusiastic discourse about the digital possibilities of intertwining music and images "belongs to a philosophy that is deeply rooted in the utopian dream of visual music." A modernist utopia, closely linked to the wish for a "'better society' that has never ceased to be beckoned through the diverse aspirations for a synthesis of the arts," which still shines through in—rather

more esoteric— formulations, such as the "holistic multi-sensual and expressive aesthetic," that the Frankfurt- based Visual Music Award expects from the entries to the competition.

As modernist utopias, however, are generally considered to have failed, their key concepts tend to lose impact, and so synaesthesia has disappeared from a large part of the contemporary discourse on visual music. Or it is at least discussed with some skepticism. Keefer and Ox acknowledge that synaesthesia is still part of the field of visual music, but "certainly not the prominent or most significant definition." Their proposed solution is the concept of "metaphoric" synaesthesia.

But, if synaesthesia is not the central element of visual music any more, how can the term be defined today? For Fox-Gieg, Keefer, and Schedel, in their "Editorial" to one of the more recent publications on visual music, "perhaps the most useful [definition] refers to visuals composed as if they were music, using musical structures. Another definition refers to a visualization of music, using the structures of an underlying composition in a new work. Still more examples of visual music include works using manual, mechanical, or algorithmic means of transcoding sound to image, pieces which translate images into sound, abstract silent films, and even performance painting and live cinema." The idea of a structural analogy based on the model of

musical composition is stressed in many definitions coming from a background of music and musi- cology. According to the musicologist Maura McDonnell, visual music productions can put an emphasis either on the "craft of composition" or on the "performance aspect." Whether the performance is based on analog instruments or realtime controllers, it should still obey the rules that structure music. 19 [These considerations consequently lead McDonnell to define visual music as "an area of activity that comes under the broad area of sonic arts." This might come as a surprise for those who have always been looking at visual music from the perspective of the visual arts or film, with Kandinsky's paintings or the films of Oskar Fischinger, Len Lye, and Mary Ellen Bute as historical references in mind. Many attempts to define visual music—whether they tend to stress the compositional or transpositional aspect or favor other forms of sound-image relations—privilege neither of its ingredients and see it as something new that emerges from the combination of image and sound. The authors may differ as to what this third entity is to be called, a "medium" or an "art form," for example, but they generally agree that the objective of visual music productions is an interaction, or even an "evenly balanced or equilibrated interplay between visual and acoustic components," leading to an effect that neither of the two components would have produced alone. This idea of sound and image coming together to form a new audiovisual entity clearly reflects Dick Higgins' concept of "intermedia" as the merging of two art forms, or media, to form a new one, the "intermedium."

Seen historically, this proximity to the concept of "intermedia" points us to the 1960s, when visual music enjoyed its second strong wave. While the idea of synaesthesia, strongly associated with the early experiments in visual music in the first decades of the 20th century, had not become completely obsolete, visual music was now part of the larger context of "expanded arts." The third wave of visual music, which is linked to the advent of realtime technologies, has embraced these historical concepts and adjusted them to the contemporary field. Due to the dual nature of visual music, the protagonists of the discipline, theoreticians and producers, have always come from different backgrounds, mostly music and the visual arts, experimental film, and, in more recent digital times, from architecture, media, or even game design. Although few of the participants in our online survey have declared themselves to be visual music artists (see p. 71), the international community is very active, gathering in the "Visual Music Village" or around the "Center for Visual Music" and the "Visual Music Archive," and meeting at festivals and conferences dedicated to visual music. Geographically, this community spreads around the world, with strong centers in the English-speaking countries, especially the US and Canada, in Europe, especially in Germany, and with growing activities in South America. These geographical centers do not come as a surprise, as visual music, born in the context of the historical avant-gardes, was initially based on the principles of Western art music.

When we look at the parameters discussed above, it appears quite unexpected that a rather clearly defined concept like visual music should suddenly start sprawling all over the field of artistic audio- visual production. Why is the concept used so inflationarily, and what is it that makes it so attractive? On the one hand, by declaring a piece to be "visual music," its producers inscribe it into an acknowledged avant- garde tradition in music and/or the visual arts with a lineage of well- known artistic examples, on the other hand, the label "visual music" implicitly maintains that sound and image come together in a meaningful way. Hence, filing an audiovisual piece or a festival, for example, under "visual music" might help to suggest a certain relevance, just by affilia- tion. ^ This is not to say, of course, that visual music has become an empty label. Following the definitions discussed above, the central point of visual music is, indeed, the quality of the audio- visual combination, which can be achieved by different means, such as a structural reference to musical composition, by transcoding sound into image or vice versa, or by performing sound and image according to the rules of (musical) improvisation. The result of this audiovisual combination should be a new, genuinely audiovisual product. "Medium" and "intermedium" are some of the terms that have already been cited as possible labels for this product. Following the idea of "inter- medium," which is, however, firmly based in the discursive context of the 1960s, it seems tempt- ing to take up a concept which addresses more directly the relations of media under the sign of the digital: the "metamedium," as the result of an "active" mix of media, as opposed to

multimedia seen as a mere addition of media. While the concept of the metamedium describes how media work together, it doesn't address specific aspects of audiovisual combination in visual music. So may- be another concept is needed, one that is based on the description of characteristics, such as the concept of genre. The short definition we have just developed—complemented by descriptive terms like "mostly abstract" and "non-narrative"—could serve as the basis for a genre definition. The only problem is that beyond this minimal definition, everything is very flexible about visual music. 29 [Unorthodox combinations of media have always been characteristic of it and have become even more so now with the post-digital mixes of media— a usage of media constituting a challenge in terms of genre definition, even for a transmedial perspective on genres. Moreover, the concept of visual music doesn't point to a certain form of presentation, a context, or a technical support— all parameters that the other concepts discussed in this book address. In return, however, these concepts all can be visual music, even if only partly, when the combination of audio and video is organized accordingly.

Antonhy McCall como Visual Music?
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=86rUPcMZ2dU

Visual music - Obras:

"O termo Visual Music foi utilizado pela primeira vez em uma descrição do pintor e crítico de arte Roger Fry em 1912 a respeito das pinturas abstratas de Kandinsky. A arte abstrata dava seus primeiros passos e uma relação de proximidade com a música podia ser constatada de variados modos em obras das primeiras décadas do século XX: a música absoluta inspirava artistas que queriam se livrar da reprodução figurativa de elementos da natureza, e apontava para a essência da imagem, para seus componentes fundamentais: forma e cor. Porém, Visual Music é apenas um dos termos empregados para descrever as diversas relações possíveis entre som e imagem. Até então, este tipo de correspondência era chamada de Color Music, pois vários artistas e inventores haviam tentado criar relações diretas entre as cores do espectro visual e as notas musicais, criando instrumentos para efetuar esta associação. Além destes dois, outros nomes foram dados a este tipo de relação audiovisual: Ocular Music, música para os olhos, Lumia, Music Video, Mobile Color, entre outros" (em **Tocando Imagens**, de Henrique Roscoe)

"Em vez de buscar uma definição capaz de estabelecer, do Olimpo do pensamento crítico, uma fronteira clara entre aquilo que seria *visual music* e as inúmeras formas e práticas audiovisuais e instalativas contemporâneas associáveis a esse conceito por meio de piruetas conceituais diversas – que constituem o exercício do pensamento possível –, é muito mais interessante resguardar o espaço vivo da diversidade, e deixar que as obras que reivindicam esse conceito façam construir o seu sentido; ou, ainda, que os trabalhos teóricos e/ou curatoriais que o cortejam o signifiquem ou ressignifiquem. " (BASBAUM, 2018, p.190)

RAEWYN TURNER

Four senses multisensory concerts: (2002)

http://www.raewynturner.com/multisensory-concerts-for-the-deaf-four-senses

JIM HODGES:

I dreamed a world and called it Love. - November 11, 2016

Vídeo da exposição: https://vimeo.com/193168906

Obras: https://www.gladstonegallery.com/artist/jim-hodges/works

JOHN WHITNEY

Matrix I (1971) : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryKT1uIPIaI&ab_channel=jordotech

Matrix II: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrKgyY5aDvA&ab_channel=crystalsculpture2

Matrix III: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrKgyY5aDvA&ab_channel=crystalsculpture2

Arabesque (1975): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQrq7S0dP54&ab_channel=jordotech

"proposto por Whitney é um divisor de águas naquilo que pode ser chamado de "tradição" da visual music, ou ainda, da linhagem histórica dos trabalhos e procedimentos artísticos que são associados a esse conceito – nos casos consagrados dos filmes de animação de Fischinger, ou das performances em Lumia de Thomas Wilfred, por exemplo, o que se fizera até então fora sobrepor imagens a sons, ou manter as imagens abstratas em movimento em seu mundo próprio.

"a música ocidental tem a marca inescapável da sua história cultural, inscrita já na definição da escala cromática de doze tons."

"Sobretudo, sua crítica conservadora à vanguarda nova-iorquina trai, de certo modo, os vínculos ideológicos entre certa produção de arte tecnológica e a modernidade, um vínculo com noções de sujeito, obra, beleza, razão e experiência estética dificilmente sustentáveis no contexto contemporâneo."

RON PELLEGRINO

Assim, ao contrário do rigor metódico que caracteriza a busca de Whitney por sua harmonia digital, a postura de Pellegrino é a do músico que brinca com seus instrumentos livremente, atrás de uma descoberta acidental que abra caminhos estéticos.

A prática da composição é menos o estudo e a aplicação de técnicas físicas e conceituais do que o cuidado e cultivo de uma inclinação universal pela exploração, observação e experiência. As artes eletrônicas de som e luz estão inquestionavelmente na esfera das artes experimentais e provavelmente permanecerão aí nos anos vindouros. Nessa condição, elas demandam grandes períodos de performance livre, brincadeira e experimentação, extensões protocomposicionais de voos de imaginação livres (PELLEGRINO, 1983, p. 211).

Cada composição se desenvolve da interação harmoniosa dos compositores e performers em ação.Um evento único, não perecível, emerge de uma consciência de grupo que, idealmente, dissolve egos individuais. O processo de grupo encoraja mudanças políticas profundas, sempre interpessoais; a mudança vem quando há necessidade que ela exista [...] (PELLEGRINO, 1983, p. 211).

"Este processo ensina o participante a assumir simultane amente os três papéis essenciais na música – compositor, performer e espectador; o maestro se torna a interação entre estes três papéis"

Yesteryear's Light

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3wFDN6-pSf0